

The  
Principle of Nonresistance

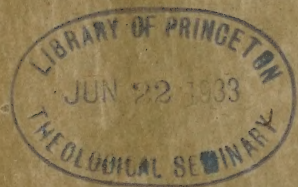
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As Held by the Mennonite Church

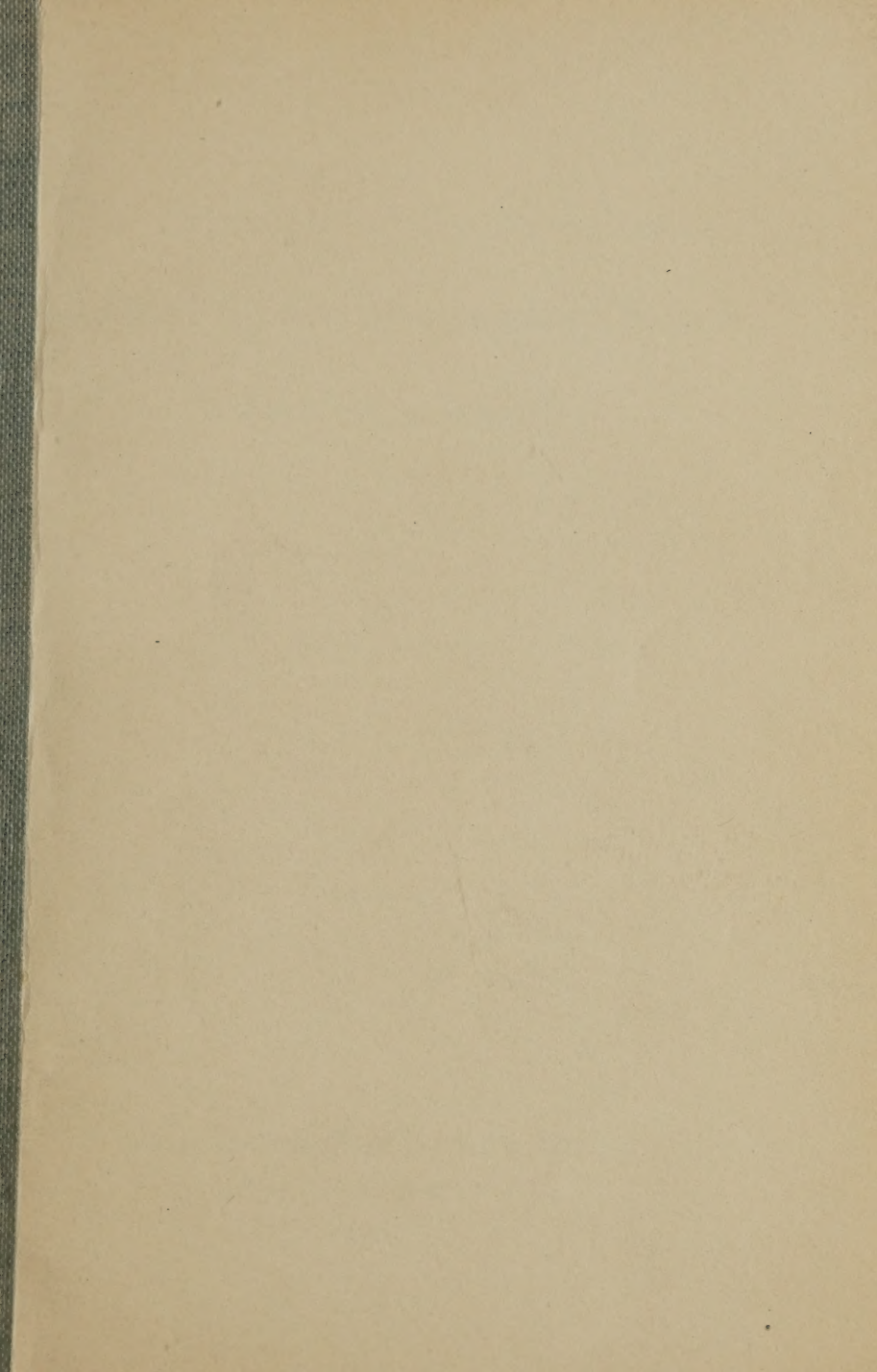
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By  
JOHN HORSCH

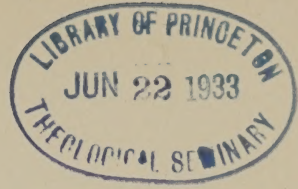
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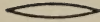




The Principle of Nonresistance  
As Held by the Mennonite Church

A HISTORICAL SURVEY

By  
John Horsch



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The Peace Problems Committee appointed by the Mennonite General Conference to study the problems arising in connection with the practice of the non-resistant principles of the Christian faith have realized the need of a treatise setting forth the attitude of the Mennonite people on this vital doctrine during the various centuries of their history. Very little concerning the attitude of our brotherhood on this point has been published to date in the English language. Many opinions stated by exponents of this principle concerning the historical attitude of the Mennonite Church have passed through the years as tradition or are based on the testimony of the few who have had access to the original sources and have been able to read the languages in which they are written. In order to give an intelligent and convincing testimony of one of the great Christian principles to the present and future generations, this record of declarations concerning this principle as held by the Church during the testing times of the faith has been set forth in the present study which is heartily endorsed by the Committee.

It is the purpose of the Committee to add to the testimony of the Church of former centuries, as here given, that of the witnesses of the faith in more recent years. The publication of records giving actions in regard to this point by the various governments that had to do with people holding the non-resistant principles is also a part of the program of the Committee. This effort on the part of the Committee is made in order that this peculiar principle of the Christian faith may be more fully appreciated as both Scriptural and practicable.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

A study of the historical position of the Mennonite Church on the principle of nonresistance has for some time been a desideratum, especially in view of the fact that a number of recent writers have defended the opinion that the early Mennonites did not hold this principle and did not disapprove of all war.<sup>1</sup> Church historians and writers on peace in general have apparently given this question little attention.

In the present study we shall let the primary sources speak for themselves regarding the attitude of the Mennonites during the various centuries on the point in question. From the testimony cited the reader may form his own conclusions as to the historic position of the Mennonite Church on the principle of nonresistance.





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# THE MENNONITE CHURCH AND THE PRINCIPLE OF NONRESISTANCE

## INTRODUCTORY

The Christian Church in general has in all ages of its history recognized the fact that our Lord taught the principle of nonresistance. This may sound unbelievable but is a historical fact. The Roman Catholic Church has always held that Christ taught nonresistance, not however as a commandment but as an advice; hence, according to the doctrine of this church, those engaging in war do not transgress a divine command and do not become guilty of sin. Martin Luther, the father of Protestantism, defended a peculiar view on this question, a view which is even to-day held by many Protestant theologians. He taught that a Christian is to be strictly nonresistant; he must refrain from going to law and can have no part in violence and bloodshed, be it in self-defense or in war. But a Christian, he says, is also a "Weltperson" and as such it is his duty to use force in the defence of others or in the service of the government as a magistrate, officer, or soldier. In such capacity, when he acts contrary to the precept of Christ, it is not sin to him. It is his duty to use the sword at the command of the government, or to defend his family or his neighbor. He does this as a "Weltperson," not as a Christian. As a subject of the state, then, he can do that which is clearly contrary to his Christian duty. Luther divided the Christian into two personalities, the duty of the one being the exact opposite to that of the other.<sup>2</sup> The fact will bear repetition that he, in theory, defended the principle of strict nonresistance for the Christian. He also emphatically agreed with the Mennonites in the opinion that civil government using force would not be necessary if all men were true Christians.<sup>3</sup>

As to the question of the attitude of the early Christians to war it must suffice here to call attention to a book on his subject, entitled, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, by C. John Cadoux (London, 1919). This is the standard work on this theme and is recognized as such by Professor Adolf von Harnack, of Berlin, the author of a book on the same subject which had previously held first place among the books on this phase of church history.<sup>3a</sup> Cadoux' book shows that the primitive Christians took substantially the same attitude to violence and war as the early Waldenses and the Mennonites and other nonresistant Christians of the Reformation period. Participation in war as well as suing at law was forbidden.

The Waldenses have been mentioned above as a non-resistant sect. The question has been raised, How is it to be explained that the modern Waldenses (in Italy and America) do not object to military service, while in medieval times the Waldenses held the principle of nonresistance? The answer is that during the Reformation period the Italian Waldenses yielded to influences from a type of Protestantism which defended the rightfulness of a union of church and state. In 1532, after the Waldenses of Italy had been in touch with Reformed theologians for a number of years, they held a synod at Angrogna in the presence of William Farel and other theologians from Geneva. With the exception of a small minority they repudiated those doctrines and principles in which they differed from the Reformed Church including the rejection of the oath and military service, and accepted the doctrine of predestination.<sup>3b</sup> They became a branch of the Reformed Church.

#### **The Peace Testimony of Peter Chelchitzki**

Peter Chelchitzki, a farmer of Chelchitz in Bohemia, was born about 1395. Little is known of his life and his religious connections. He was probably connected with

one of the Hussite groups. That he was a consistent defender of the principle of nonresistance is evident from a number of his extant books. The following quotation from him will serve as evidence that about a century before the rise of the Mennonite Church there were, even outside of the Waldensian Church, those who maintained a strong and consistent testimony against violence and war. He says:

Worldly rulers have contentions for the sake of material wealth and worldly honor. Let some one threaten their sovereignty and at once they engage in war. They seize the men and bring them together like a herd and drive them into the conflict where those on the one side kill and rob those on the other. . . . . And the worst is that they undertake to compel Christians to engage in such conflicts, for on both sides there may be a few who cannot with a good, clear conscience kill and rob others. Yea, brother goes against brother to harm him, when according to the Christian faith he should die for him. Compelled by self-seeking authority he goes out to kill and rob his brother, and does not have the conviction and love to follow the Lord into death rather than become guilty of such evil deeds.

The one party is praying for their governors and the other party for theirs that they may be victorious. Each party prays for victory against the other. And both are named Christians though each one is wishing well only to his own party. The Christians on both sides engage wrongfully in bloody strife and pray that they may be victorious over the other side. Whom, now, will God hear? Since on both sides they are Christians, they combat unlawfully with each other and their prayer is not of faith. God does not hear them. The faith of these Christians is torn to shreds and their prayer is powerless since it is aimed at shedding the blood of brethren. And if those with whom they are engaged in such conflict are not brothers, they may be enemies and God has commanded to pray for such and to do them good.

The whole rabble of these divided bands are called

Christians and together they pray: Our Father which art in heaven. They approach God in this way while each party has in mind the destruction of the other. They think they are serving God by shedding others' blood. And on both sides they say: Forgive us as we forgive. And every party seeks to increase its military force and never thinks of forgiving the other so long as they can hope to overcome them. Therefore their prayers are blasphemies against God.<sup>3c</sup>

### Mennonites and Anabaptists

The spiritual ancestors of the groups of churches which are to-day known as Mennonites consisted at the time of the Reformation of three groups, namely the Swiss Brethren (in Switzerland, South Germany, Alsace, and Moravia), the Obbenites (in the Netherlands and North Germany), and the Hutterian Brethren (principally in Moravia). Menno Simons was not the founder of any of these groups. He united with the Obbenites (named after Obbe Philips) in 1536 and soon became their principal leader. His field of labor was Holland, North Germany, and Holstein. The churches in these countries were the first to use the name Mennonites.

The Mennonites who came to America before 1873 (when the immigration of Russian and Prussian Mennonites began) were with few exceptions descendants of the Swiss Brethren. The majority of the Mennonite congregations of America were originally of this group. In Switzerland the churches of this communion have never owned the name Mennonite; they are to-day commonly known as *Täufer* while in France they are called *Anabaptistes*.

In the Reformation period the Hutterian Brethren were a distinct group since they practised "community of goods" based on Christian principles. To-day about half of their number have discarded the community life and have adopted the name Mennonites.

In the Reformation period not only these three groups

of churches but all sects which disowned infant baptism were called Anabaptists. This included a number of sects from which the Swiss Brethren, Obbenites and Hutterians differed on the principle of nonresistance and on other vital points of doctrine and practice. Menno Simons says of certain Anabaptist sects, such as the followers of John of Leiden and David Joris, that they erred even more gravely than the Roman Catholic Church. Of all parties known by the name of Anabaptists only the above mentioned three groups survived the persecutions. It is also noteworthy that before the rise of the Swiss Brethren none of the other sects that were known by the name of Anabaptists existed. Therefore the view that the Swiss Brethren descended from unevangelical Anabaptist sects is untenable. In this study attention is confined to the above mentioned three groups which today are generally known by the name of Mennonites, and, when reference is made to the three groups collectively, the designation "Mennonites" will be used although this name was not applied to all of them in the time of the Reformation.

## I. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

### Testimony of the Swiss Brethren

The earliest testimony against war by a leader of the Swiss Brethren comes from Andreas Castelberger, dating from the year 1523—about two years before the first congregations of the Brethren were organized. Lorenz Hochrütiner was asked by the Zurich authorities what Castelberger had preached in the meetings held by those who later began to practice believers' baptism and organized themselves as a congregation. He replied that Castelberger "had said much about war, showing that the divine doctrine is vehemently opposed to it and that war is sin."<sup>4</sup> It may be worth noticing in this connection that this was

also the position maintained by Ulrich Zwingli, though this point is not within the scope of our discussion. Professor Walter Koehler, of Zurich, editor of the new edition of Zwingli's Works, concedes that Zwingli was in that period a pacifist.<sup>5</sup>

Another important testimony against war was given in September, 1524, by Conrad Grebel, the principal founder of the Swiss Brethren Church, in a letter to Thomas M $\ddot{u}$ nzer. His outspoken style in this citation is evidently to be ascribed to the fact that M $\ddot{u}$ nzer had taken the sword and it was Grebel's purpose in this letter to show him his error on this vital point. Grebel wrote:

The Gospel and those who accept it should not be protected with the sword, neither should they thus protect themselves. . . . . True, believing Christians are as sheep in the midst of wolves, sheep for the slaughter. They must be baptized in anxiety and trouble, tribulation, persecution, suffering and death. They must be tried in the fire and must reach the fatherland of eternal rest, not by slaying bodily enemies but by overcoming spiritual foes. They use neither the worldly sword nor engage in war, since among them taking human life has ceased entirely, for we are no longer under the Old Covenant.<sup>6</sup>

Felix Manz, one of the most influential leaders of the early Swiss Brethren, said: "No Christian smites with the sword nor resists evil."<sup>7</sup> The death sentence pronounced over him on January 5, 1527, charged that Manz held that no Christian can be a magistrate nor execute the death-sentence on any person, nor put to death or as a magistrate punish any one.<sup>8</sup>

The first confession of faith of the Swiss Brethren is the Schlatten Confession drawn up by Michael Sattler and adopted by a conference held at Schlatten in the southern part of Baden near Schaffhausen, February 24, 1527. Sattler was, after the death of Grebel and Manz, the most prominent leader of the Swiss Brethren. He was burned



at the stake on May 21, 1527, at Rottenburg on the Neckar. On the question of peace and nonresistance this confession contains the following articles.<sup>9</sup>

Jesus Christ has made us free from the servitude of the flesh and meet for the service of God through the spirit which He has given us. Therefore we shall surely lay down the unchristian, yea satanic weapons of force, such as sword, armor and the like, together with all their use, whether for the protection of friends or against personal enemies; and this in the strength of the words of Christ, "I say unto you that ye resist not evil."

The government using the sword to punish and put to death the wrongdoers and to guard and protect the good is an appointment of God outside the perfection of Christ. In the law of the Old Covenant the sword is ordained against the evil for punishment and death, and to exercise it the worldly governments are appointed.

In the perfection of Christ, however, church discipline alone is used for the correction and exclusion of those who have sinned, not indeed for the destruction of the flesh but as an admonition and injunction to sin no more.

Here it is asked by many who do not know Christ's will toward us whether a Christian may or should use the sword against the evil for protecting or defending the good, or for love's sake.

Our unanimous answer is: Christ teaches and commands that we should learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart and we shall find rest to our souls. Now Christ did not say concerning the woman taken in adultery that she should be stoned to death according to the law of His Father, and yet He says: "I do nothing of myself but as my Father has taught me." He spoke to her words of mercy and forgiveness and admonition to sin no more. In such a way we too should act, according to the rule of church discipline.

The Schlatten Confession and nearly all other Mennonite confessions contain articles on the question whether a Christian may be a magistrate, or an executive of the

civil government. This is an important point, in view of the assertion made by a number of writers that the early Mennonites did not repudiate war but only violence in private life, as well as religious persecution and insurrection against the government. The writers who have defended such views are of the opinion that the early Mennonites, since they recognized the government as a divine appointment, had no objection to the use of force by Christians when acting in the service of the government, as officers of the law or soldiers. But the records show that they did not permit members of their communion to accept civil offices which involve a violation of the principle of nonresistance.<sup>10</sup> Besides, the above quoted testimony of Castelberger, Grebel, Manz and the Schlatten Confession, as well as numerous other quotations to be given, can leave no doubt as to the early Mennonite position in respect to war. The Schlatten confession has the following article on the question whether a Christian may be a magistrate or an executive of the government:

Again it is asked, May a Christian be a magistrate if he is appointed to such an office? Our answer is that Christ, when He was to be made king, fled and did not regard the law given by His Father [under the Old Covenant]. Thus also we should do and follow Him, then we shall not walk in darkness, for He Himself says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And He forbids His followers the use of the power of the sword and says: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, . . . .but it shall not be so among you." Again, Paul says: "Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son." And Peter says that Christ suffered (not reigned) leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.

That a Christian should not be a magistrate is made evident by these reasons: The civil government [is not of a religious or spiritual character, but] is

according to the flesh; the work of the Christian is according to the Spirit. The things with which the civil government has to do endure but for a time; the possessions of the Christian are eternal in the heavens. (II Cor. 5:1). The former's citizenship is of this world; that of the Christian is of heaven (Phil. 3:20). The former's weapons of conflict and war are carnal and used only against the flesh; the weapons of the Christian are spiritual and used against the strongholds of the devil. The world is armed with weapons of steel and iron, the Christian is armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and the Word of God. In short, as Christ, our Head was minded, even so should through Him all members of His body be minded.

A confession written in June, 1527, by a minister of the Swiss Brethren, named Carlin, who was imprisoned for his faith in Basel, has the following article:

That the government is ordained of God and that the power is of God is stated by Paul in his letter to the Romans, chapter 13. Besides, Christ said that the power of Pilate was of God (John 19:11). But according to the command of the Father (Matt. 17:5) we should hear Christ, the Son of God, alone. Since, now, Christ fled when He was to be chosen king, also He did not pass sentence upon the adulterous woman, and would not judge between two men in matters pertaining to earthly possessions (Luke 12:14), and His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36); moreover nowhere in Scripture is the government said to be of a Christian nature and it is not the Christians' province to judge those that are without (I Cor. 5:12, 13), but Christians should use church discipline alone; therefore, according to Christ's example it is not in place for a Christian to be a magistrate, but he should avoid all that is doubtful and shun the office of the magistracy. But this does not say that the government should be abolished.<sup>11</sup>

The following is taken from a sermon preached by Hans Marquardt, a minister of the Swiss Brethren, at St. Gall, Switzerland, in 1528.

We confess that civil government is necessary and is a divine appointment and that the use of the sword by the government is good and necessary, and we say with Paul, Rom. 13, that every man should be subject and obedient to the higher power, not only to a mild and peaceful but also to a tyrannical government, for the reason that there is no power but of God. Therefore all believers, under whatever government they may live, will not complain of heavy burdens, nor will they resist the government or cause trouble or uproar on account of what they may be called upon to bear. In matters of their faith, however, the believers are responsible to God alone to whom they owe more obedience than to man. Therefore all our brethren esteem their faith in God through Christ Jesus, our Savior, as the highest, greatest and most valuable thing, and of this we do not suffer ourselves to be robbed even if our life is at stake. But in matters which do not concern faith and conscience and do not conflict with our duty to God, we are ready to obey the civil government in anything that may be asked of us. And if the government, contrary to justice and right, confiscates our property and reduces us to poverty, we bear and suffer it, since it is impossible for us to escape such oppression without transgression and disturbance.

But that the Christian should be an executive of the government, or a magistrate, we do not admit. Christ says, Luke 22, "The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve." Here the believers are forbidden the execution of government by force. And the fact that under the Old Covenant God has permitted His people the use of the sword does not concern or bind us, for the old law has been replaced by the new commandment of Christ that we should love our enemies. . . . . The believer is not to be an earthly ruler, or to use violence, or go to war, or use the sword.<sup>12</sup>

In the discussions held in Zofingen, in the canton

Bern, Switzerland, in July, 1532, the spokesmen of the Swiss Brethren said:

In Matthew, chapter 5, Christ forbids the believers all use of force. He says that rather than go to law they should permit others to defraud them, should not strive with any one and should give the cloak to him who takes away their coat. The civil government was ordained of God to punish the evildoers and protect the good. . . . . We believe the civil government should be separate from the church of Christ and not be established in it. Whatever we owe to the government: interest, tithes, taxes and customs, we give willingly and obediently. We obey the government in everything that may be asked of us that is not contrary to God.<sup>13</sup>

In March of the year 1538 an eight days' discussion was held in the city of Bern. Here the representatives of the Brethren said:

Christ, in teaching the principle of nonresistance, does not desire to abolish the civil government. He recognizes the rightfulness of the government, but teaches that it should be outside the Christian church. This is our position on this question. . . . . On this point the Gospel differs from the Mosaic law.<sup>14</sup>

Heinrich Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli as the head of the state church of the Canton Zurich, wrote two books against the Swiss Brethren which were published in 1531 and 1560. He states that the Brethren considered war "the greatest evil conceivable."<sup>15</sup> Further he says:

They believe that Christians should stand ready to suffer [rather than strike back]. No Christian may be a ruler. The government should not undertake to regulate matters of faith and religious practice. Christians do not resist violence and do not take recourse to law. They do not use the law courts. Christians do not kill. The punishment used by them is not imprisonment and the sword but only church discipline. They do not defend themselves, therefore they do not go to war and are not obedient to the government on this point.<sup>16</sup>

Appended to Bullinger's second work mentioned above

is a booklet written by spokesmen of the Swiss Brethren giving their reasons why they did not make common cause with the state church. The following citation is taken from this booklet:

The theologians of the established church have in the first period of their reformatory labors advocated the Christian, evangelical opinion that Christians should not protect themselves, or their evangelical doctrine, by worldly, carnal force, sword, weapons or resistance, nor defend themselves in this way against their adversaries and opponents, but should use only the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit and other weapons which are mentioned in Ephesians, chapter 6; and that they should not avenge themselves, not resist evil; the worldly, Mosaic sword should not be found among them: they should not seek justice before a court of law on account of earthly possessions or honor, but should be willing to suffer and bear the cross, if they would be Christians. And this, their former doctrine, is clearly founded on the New Testament Scriptures.<sup>17</sup>

In the discussions held at Frankenthal in the Palatinate from May 28 to June 19 of the year 1571, between representatives of the Swiss Brethren and the Reformed state church, the spokesmen of the Brethren said:

We agree with you in the opinion that a Christian should not revenge himself, but Christ teaches (Matt. 5) that even if we have been wronged, we should not cause the government to use violence against any one for our sake. Our thought is not that the office of the magistrate should not be recognized, yet we would not by our accusation be the cause that vengeance is exercised by the government against the transgressor.

You say that a Christian could be a magistrate and punish wrongdoers with the sword. We cannot accept this without proof from Christ and the apostles.

We confess that the magistracy, according to Paul's teaching (Rom. 13) is ordained of God. But that a Christian may serve in such an office, to exercise vengeance by the sword, for such teaching we demand scriptural evidence.

All believers are pointed to the example of Christ. His apostles have neither engaged in war nor used the sword for punishment but have manifested love toward enemies as well as friends.

You say that the peace of Christ should be within the heart of the believer but that he could nevertheless engage in war if he is asked to do so. We do not find an apostolic example that would show this.<sup>18</sup>

In 1589 the Swiss Brethren of the Canton Zurich, in a *Supplication* addressed to the authorities, said:

It is the business of the government to protect the good and, by the use of force, to punish the evil according to their transgressions. Therefore to be a magistrate using the sword and to be a Christian are two things which do not agree. We recognize the government as a necessary institution.....But we do not believe that the civil authority should be within the church of God.<sup>19</sup>

Balthasar Hubmaier, one of the most influential Anabaptist leaders, was not a member of the Swiss Brethren Church and did not defend the principle of nonresistance. In his booklet, *On the Sword*, he addressed himself to the Brethren aiming to persuade them by many arguments that their anti-war position was unscriptural. He advocated the view that the Christian may use the sword both in war and as an officer of the government. It is worthy of note that in this booklet he speaks of the Brethren as another party to which he did not belong.<sup>20</sup> At Nicolsburg, in Moravia (Czecho-Slovakia), where Hubmaier labored with great success under the protection of the Lords of Lichtenstein, his followers were called "Schwertler" (men of the sword) while the nonresistant Brethren were given the name of "Staebler" (men of the staff).

A position about midway between Hubmaier and the Swiss Brethren was held by Jacob Gross who for a time (1525) was a member of Hubmaier's congregation at Waldshut. Having been imprisoned in Strasburg, he de-

clared himself willing to do "noncombatant" military service but would not consent to make any attempt at taking human life, for, said he, "to kill a human being is not written in any commandment of God."

### Testimony of the Hutterian Brethren

Jacob Hutter, after whom the Hutterian Brethren were named wrote in a letter to the Moravian authorities, in 1535, after the congregation under his care had been driven from their dwellings by a detachment of soldiers upon the command of the authorities:

At the present time we find ourselves camping on the wide, wide heath; if God will, without causing disadvantage to any one. We will not do a wrong or injury to any man, yea, not to our greatest enemy, neither to Ferdinandus [King of Austria] nor any one else, great or small. All our actions and conduct, word and work, life and walk, are open; there is no secret about it all. Rather than knowingly to rob a man of a penny we would willingly give up a hundred guilders. And before we would give our greatest enemy a blow with the hand, to say nothing of spear, sword or halberd as is the manner of the world, we would be willing to lose our lives.

We have no weapons of defence, such as spears or guns, as every one sees and knows. In short, in our preaching and speaking and our whole walk of life our object is to live in peace and unity according to the truth and will of God, as the true followers of Christ.<sup>21</sup>

The confession of faith of the Hutterian Brethren, written by Peter Riedemann, contains articles on the point of nonresistance and war. The exact time when this confession was written is unknown. It is supposed that the first edition was printed in 1545. Following are pertinent quotations from this confession.<sup>22</sup>

### ON WAR

Christ, the Prince of peace, has established His kingdom, that is His church, and has purchased it by



His blood. In this kingdom all worldly warfare has ended. (Luke 2:14; Eph. 5:1,2; Isa. 11:6-9; Micah 4, 3).—Therefore a Christian has no part in war nor does he wield the sword to execute vengeance, as also Paul exhorts and says: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written: Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Deut. 32:35; Heb. 12:19-21). Since vengeance is the Lord’s and not ours, it should be committed to Him and is not to be exercised by us. Being followers of Christ we must manifest His nature who, though He had all power over His enemies, did not recompense evil for evil (I Pet. 2:21-23). He did not use His power against His enemies nor did He permit others to defend Him. He said to Peter: “Put up thy sword” (Matt. 26:52; John 18:10,11). Here is seen with what sort of a mighty army our King met His enemies and in what manner He slays His adversaries and executes vengeance. He heals the high priest’s servant’s ear which Peter had cut off. Now He who has done this says: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:32; Luke 9:23).

Christ wills that we should do as He has done, hence He commands us and says: “But I say unto you that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:39). This shows clearly that we should not avenge ourselves nor engage in war.

But if it be said that David who was loved of God, and other saints, have waged war, therefore it is right now, if there be occasion or authorization for it; our answer is: No. That we should not do such things, although David and other saints engaged in them, is clear from the above quoted words of Christ: “Resist not evil,” though “to them of old time it was said: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (Matt. 5:38). Here Christ Himself points out the difference, therefore there is no need of using many words. Christ’s words indicate that a Christian must not go to war nor use vengeance. But he who notwithstanding does these things has denied Christ’s nature and forsaken His ways.

### ON MAKING WEAPONS

Since, as said above, Christians should make their swords into useful tools, or lay them down, they can much less make swords, for such weapons serve for nothing but to kill, for the wounding and destruction of men; and Christ came not to destroy men, therefore He rebuked His disciples and said: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke 9:55). As if to say: Does the spirit of grace teach you to destroy others, and would you act in a carnal way? (Gal. 3:3). If you would be my disciples, you must be led by my Spirit and not walk after the flesh; "for they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8).

Now, since Christians should not use or exercise vengeance, they must not make the weapons by which such vengeance and destruction may be exercised, lest they make themselves partakers of others' sins. Therefore we make neither swords, spears, guns nor other similar weapons. But whatever is made in the interest and for the daily use of men, such as bread knives, axes, hoes, and the like, we may consistently make and do make. But if some one would say that it is possible even with such tools to injure or kill a man, our reply is that these things are not made for such purposes; therefore we are free to make them. But if some one would use these tools to any one's injury, this is not our responsibility; let him answer for his own deeds.

### WHETHER A CHRISTIAN MAY USE THE LAW

Since, as said above, all that is temporal is foreign to us and is not our own (Luke 16:11, 12) therefore a Christian cannot quarrel or dispute or go to law about it but, as one who has turned away his heart from the world and directed it to the heavenlies, he is minded rather to suffer wrong, as also Paul says, I Cor. 6:7: "There is clearly a fault among you to go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

### Testimony of the Dutch Mennonites

Menno Simons' writings contain considerable material on nonresistance. Following are a few selections.

The regenerated do not go to war, nor engage in strife. They are the children of peace who have beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and know of no war. They render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. Their sword is the sword of the Spirit which they wield with a good conscience through the Holy Ghost. (Part II, p. 170b).<sup>23</sup>

Since we are to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), how can we then fight our enemies with the sword? Does not the apostle Peter say: "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again" etc. (I Pet. 2:21-23; Matt. 16:24). (Part II, p. 435b).

Peter was commanded to put up his sword into the sheath. All Christians are bidden to love their enemies, do good to those that do them evil and pray for those who abuse and persecute them; to give the cloak also if any one sue them at law for the coat; if they are smitten on the right cheek to turn to him who abuses them the other also. Say, beloved, how can a Christian, according to the Scriptures, consistently retaliate, rebel, war, murder, slay, torture, steal, rob and burn cities and conquer countries? (Part II, p. 306b).

Again, our fortress is Christ, our defence is patience, our sword is the Word of God, and our victory is the sincere, firm, unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ. Spears and swords of iron we leave to those who, alas, consider human blood and swine's blood of well-nigh equal value. He that is wise, let him judge what I mean. (Part I, p. 81b).

I am well aware that the tyrants who boast themselves Christians attempt to justify their horrible wars and shedding of blood, and would make a good work of it by referring us to Moses, Joshua, etc. But they do

not reflect that Moses and his successors, with their iron sword, have served out their time and that Jesus Christ has now given us a new commandment and has girded our loins with another sword. . . . They do not consider that they use the sword of war contrary to all evangelical Scripture against their own brethren, namely those of like faith with them who have received the same baptism and have broken the same bread with them and are thus members of the same body. (Part I, p. 198).

Captains, knights, soldiers and such like bloody men are offering to sell soul and body for money<sup>24</sup> and swear with uplifted hand that they will destroy cities and countries, apprehend and kill the citizens and inhabitants and rob them of their possessions, although they have never harmed them nor given them any provocation. O, what an accursed, wicked, abominable business! And yet it is said that they protect the country and people and assist in administering justice! (Part I, p. 137a).

We confess and have always confessed, as long as with our small talent we have served the Word of the Lord, that the office of the magistracy is ordained of God; and we have always been obedient to them when their demands were not contrary to the Word of God, and we desire to do so all our lives. For we are not so ignorant not to know what the Word of God teaches and demands of us in this respect. Taxes and duties we pay, as Christ has taught and Himself has rendered. We pray for the imperial majesty, kings, lords, princes and all in authority, and honor and obey them. (Part II, p. 302b).

A conference of Waterland Mennonites, held in 1568 at Emden in East Friesland, made the following decision concerning those who had given offence by taking part in drilling for military service:

"If a brother has taken part in this, he shall desist from it, confess to sorrow for the offence and ask the forgiveness of God and the church before he may be recognized as in peace with the church."<sup>25</sup>

Hendrik Alewijns, of Middelburgh in Holland, who,

with two other brethren, was burned alive on February 9, 1569, says in his extant confession of faith, written for his children:

It is needful to distinguish between the New and the Old Covenant. Under the Old Covenant Israel engaged in war, revenge was taken on enemies, there was fighting and taking human life; and under the old Law this was done by the will, command, permission and also help of God. But now, in the dispensation of the Gospel, under the New Covenant, these things cannot be permitted, they are plainly forbidden by the word and example of Christ, Himself God and the Son of God, whom we are commanded to hear (Matt. 17:5). These things, I say, are plainly and clearly prohibited, not by man but by God Himself. All revenge is denied and forbidden the people of God. They are commanded to commit all vengeance unto God, not to resist evil but to give to him that taketh away the coat also the cloak, and to turn to him that smites them on the right cheek the other also; yea to love their enemies, to pray for their persecutors and to flee from them from one city to another (Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:17; I Thes. 5:15). And they that are thus afflicted are, according to Christ's words, blessed and are promised their reward in heaven.

In short, the Christian must not fight at all; and yet he must fight, but not with weapons of iron, steel, stone, wood, or other carnal weapons but with spiritual weapons which are mighty before God. Read, my children, what weapons Christians wield and what war they wage, as it is plainly and clearly set forth in Ephesians, chapter 6. Christians have no other warfare at this time, for the prophecy given with reference to this time is fulfilled that the swords should be made into plowshares and the spears into sickles, etc. Therefore we may not engage in war.<sup>26</sup>

In the discussions between Mennonite and Reformed theologians, held in 124 sessions at Emden in East Friesland, from February 27 to May 17, 1578, the spokesmen of the Mennonites said:

From the Scriptures which you have cited it cannot be shown that the office of the government, including the use of the sword, should be exercised by those within the church.

We say that during the time when the enemy is near or before the gates of the city, we would not with weapons of war do guard service, nor would we send another in our place. But so long as there is no occasion to fight an enemy we are willing to pay another to do such service.<sup>27</sup>

The short Mennonite confession of 1591, called the *Concept of Cologne*, contains the following article:

No vengeance is permitted; nay it is forbidden, not only with outward weapons but also to give railing for railing.<sup>28</sup>

In the public discussions of Leeuwarden in Friesland, in 1596, Peter of Cologne, one of the Mennonite speakers, said that a believer in Christ may fight with no material weapons but only with the weapon of the Spirit which is the Word of God.<sup>29</sup> He said further:

War is forbidden the believers, for we find that those who would ascend into the hill of the Lord must walk in His light and that they shall make their swords into plowshares and their spears into sickles, etc. Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:1.<sup>30</sup>

### The Question of Military Exemption in Early Mennonite History

During the period of the severest persecution and until the last quarter of the sixteenth century apparently no appeals were made by the Mennonites of any country for exemption from military service; evidently no one was sentenced or punished for refusing such service. From these facts a number of writers have drawn the conclusion that the early Mennonites did not maintain the position of conscientious objection to war. These writers have overlooked the fact that general conscription was then un-

known. Almost without exception armies consisted of mercenaries and volunteers.

However, the principal reason why there was no occasion for efforts toward exemption from military service is to be sought in the extremely intolerant attitude of the governments to the Mennonites. They were treated as criminals and were not wanted in the armies.

In the year 1528 the authorities of various states used detachments of soldiers and police to apprehend and put to death all Anabaptists. They were not given a hearing nor was there a formal sentence passed. The question to be settled was simply whether the defendant had been baptized on the confession of his faith and this was, as a rule, easy to decide. If he did not give a negative answer when asked, he was immediately put to death. Many suffered martyrdom at the hands of detachments of soldiers and bands of police.<sup>31</sup>

In 1529 the procedure of executing the Anabaptists without trial or sentence was given the sanction of imperial law. In this year the German Diet (the assembly of the Estates, or representatives of the Empire), convened at Spires, passed the death sentence summarily upon all Anabaptists. Renouncing the state church and being baptized on the confession of faith was officially made a capital offence. It was expressly stipulated by this Diet that Anabaptists were not entitled to a hearing before a court and that no formal sentence need be passed. In Roman Catholic countries even recantation, as a rule, would not save the life of one who had received adult baptism, since the law, as passed by the Diet of Spires, demanded that "all rebaptized persons" should be put to death.<sup>32</sup> The rule was that those who denied their faith were beheaded instead of being burned at the stake. One of the many who suffered such a fate was the Mennonite minister Gillis of Aachen who, after recantation, in 1557, was beheaded at

Antwerp. As early as 1527 Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria gave the terrible orders: "Those who recant shall be beheaded and those who do not recant burned at the stake."

According to the laws of the empire it was a crime to give lodging to an "Anabaptist." Houses in which Anabaptists had been permitted to lodge were confiscated by the government and in many instances razed. The house of a certain Jan Neulen, for example, was confiscated for no other reason than that Menno Simons had entered it without the protest of its owner. Many houses were destroyed in various provinces for similar reasons.

This explains why, during the first half of their history, there is no record of any effort on the part of Mennonites to secure exemption from military service. The fact that there is no such record does not by any means prove that they were not conscientious objectors. There is convincing proof that the Mennonites, from the beginning of their history, held the principle of nonresistance.

It was only after severe persecution had ceased and the Mennonites had been granted a measure of toleration that they were expected to render military service. The first country to tolerate them was Holland. When that country became involved in war, the Mennonites for the first time encountered difficulties on account of their refusal to render such service. In 1577 Prince William of Orange, the ruler of the United Netherlands, granted them exemption.

## II. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The confession of faith of the Waterland Mennonites,<sup>33</sup> drawn up by two of their most prominent ministers, Hans de Ries and Lubbert Gerrits, and published 1610 at Alkmaar, has the following article on *The Office of the Civil Magistracy or Government*:<sup>34</sup>



The worldly authority, or civil magistracy, is a necessary ordinance of God, instituted and appointed for the maintenance of general government and to make possible a good natural civil life, for the protection of the good and the punishment of the evil.

The Lord Jesus did not institute the office of the magistracy in His spiritual kingdom, the church of the New Testament, nor has He included it in the offices peculiar to His church (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4, 11). He did not call His disciples or followers to be worldly kings, princes, rulers or authorities (Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:25-27), nor has He ordered them to accept such offices or to rule the world in such a worldly manner. Again He did not give to the members of His church instructions befitting such an office or government. But He, whom they were bidden by a voice from heaven to hear, has called them to follow His nonresistant life (Heb. 12:2, 3; I Pet. 2:21-23) and His cross-bearing example, and in His example nothing is less in evidence than worldly authority, civil power, or the sword. Taking all this into consideration and, furthermore, in view of the fact that with the office of the civil magistracy many other things are connected, such as war, violence, punishing enemies [wrongdoers] by depriving them of possessions and life, and other things which agree either badly or not at all with the self-denying life of a Christian—for these reasons we shun such offices.

In the confession written by Jan Centsen in Amsterdam, 1630, we have the following:<sup>35</sup>

Christ enjoined on His people to follow His defenseless, cross-bearing life prohibiting all revenge, not only with arms but also to return railing for railing; and on the contrary He has commanded us to pray for our enemies, to do good unto them that wrong us and, in short, to shun many things which are connected with the office of the magistracy; therefore we do not accept civil offices.

Article 14 of the Mennonite Confession of Dort, 1632,<sup>36</sup> reads as follows:

Regarding revenge and resisting our enemies with

the sword we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus Christ has forbidden His disciples and followers all retaliation and revenge, and has commanded them not to "return evil for evil nor railing for railing," but to "put up the sword into the sheath" or, as the prophets foretold, "beat them into ploughshares" (Matt. 5:39, 44; Rom. 12:14; I Pet. 3:9; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).

From this we see that, following His example, life, and teaching, we cannot cause suffering, harm, or grief to any one, but we must seek the highest welfare and salvation of all men. We believe that, if necessity requires it, we should flee for the Lord's sake from one city or country to another and suffer "the spoiling of our goods," rather than to cause suffering to any one. And if we are struck, we should turn the other cheek also, rather than to retaliate or strike back (Matt. 5:39; 10:23; Rom. 12:19).

The congregations of the Waterland Mennonites in Amsterdam decided, in 1619, that members who traveled on armed ships (sailing, principally, for the East Indies), or who shared in the ownership of such ships, as well as those who consented to serve as jurors "in cases of accusation for capital crimes or when such services would otherwise conflict with the love of God, or our neighbor, or the law of Christ, could not be permitted to partake of the communion." This decision was restated and approved by the same group of churches in 1631 and again in 1647.<sup>37</sup> At Harlingen during the same century the rule was that those who transgressed in this way were excommunicated.<sup>38</sup> Many Mennonites who had become identified with the Netherlands East India Company withdrew from this company early in the sixteenth century because their ships carried cannon and other means of defense.

In 1613 a member of one of the Waterland congregations in Amsterdam was taken to task by the church for the reason that he had severely attacked "two thieves who had come into his room to steal." "He confessed that he was sorry for what he had done and asked God and

the brethren to forgive him, declaring further that, in order to obtain forgiveness, he was willing to bear and fulfil anything which, according to the Word of God, may be asked of him, and he further agreed that this confession should be brought before the congregation."<sup>39</sup>

Vincent de Hond, a prominent minister among the Old Flemish Mennonites at Haarlem, wrote some time during the first quarter of this century:

From all these and many other passages of Scripture it is clear that we cannot accept the office of the magistracy and, what is more, we cannot be obedient in things that are contrary to the teaching of the Lord.

Therefore, if any one, be it even the government, would command us to resist evil with outward weapons, we are not under duty to obey and cannot do so even if we should be made to suffer for it. For it is better to suffer than to burden the conscience by doing that which we understand to be forbidden by the Lord.<sup>40</sup>

I understand that the expressions "government" and "sword of the government" have the same meaning, for the government reigns with the sword and there is no government without the sword, that is, without force or power. No government can exercise its office without punishment.<sup>41</sup>

Jacob Janz, minister of the Old Flemish church on the Dutch island of Ameland, wrote about 1650:

Is it not to be deplored that the members of Christ's body and of His spiritual kingdom should be compelled to take part in the abominable bloody war? Such a demand is made of those who are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of peace; of those who in Christ have laid aside all enmity, hatred, envy and strife. . . . And though they "walk in the flesh, they do not war after the flesh." "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God" (II Cor. 10:3, 4).<sup>42</sup>

Georg Hanson, minister of the Flemish Mennonite

church at Danzig, wrote in his *Instructions in the Faith, For Young People*, in 1671.

The weapons which we need to this end are, according to Paul's teaching, none other than the whole armor of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:11-17). Christian believers can use no other weapons.<sup>43</sup>

Jan Dionijssen Verburg, a Mennonite minister of Rotterdam, said in a booklet published in 1678:

Christians are forbidden to engage in war, whether it be called defensive or offensive war, that is to say, whether the purpose is to ward off bodily violence or to inflict it on others. The difference which is often made between offensive and defensive, that is, between attacking and resisting attack, is nothing more than an excuse which serves to becloud the issue. The fact is that a defensive war differs from an offensive one only in this respect that the former is waged against an enemy who first attacks us and the latter against one whom we attack first. Nevertheless all that is found possible to do in the way of destruction, murder and devastation is carried out in the one case as well as in the other. And men fail in their Christian duty toward their enemies even if they defend the walls of a city without undertaking an attacking sally and committing one of the abominations named.<sup>44</sup>

Engel Arentson, minister of the Mennonite church at Rijp in Holland, wrote in a booklet in 1693:

What is war but a sea of misery, a wilderness filled with horrors of every description? Sometimes, it is true, the evil is given a good appearance by the assertion that it serves to protect right and innocence. But who could believe that one could be made happy by the misfortune of others?—Who was ever able to reconcile war with the principles of righteousness and equity?<sup>45</sup>

Galenus Abrahams, a prominent Mennonite minister of Amsterdam, in his *Short System of Christian Doctrine*, published in 1699, wrote:

Furthermore we believe that to Christians it is not only prohibited to demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, or to engage in war against their enemies, but that all resistance which they might offer to protect their property or life, or by which they might destroy that of their neighbor is expressly forbidden them. We believe that they are in duty bound, according to the holy, heavenly doctrine of their Redeemer and His perfect example, to love their enemies, to bless them that curse them, etc.<sup>46</sup>

Abrahams also says at another place:

All resistance by force and all attempts having for their object the defence or protection of ourselves, or our families, or property by affronting, wounding or killing our fellow man, we believe to be forbidden the Christian, as well as vengeance of every description.<sup>47</sup>

### III. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A member of the Mennonite church at Alkmaar in Holland, Dr. Klaas Toornburg, in 1688 published a book containing a noteworthy defense of the principle of non-resistance. He notes with regret that some of the Mennonite churches of Holland had discarded their earlier position on this point.<sup>48</sup> There is, on the other hand, much material to establish the fact that during the eighteenth century various Mennonite groups, comprising many congregations, faithfully maintained the historic attitude of the church. While the following quotations refer to Mennonite groups in the Netherlands, North Germany and Poland, the churches in other countries—Switzerland, South Germany, France, and America—were of one mind with them.

A number of Mennonites of Holland, in a *Vindication* of their brethren in Switzerland who were persecuted for their refusal to serve in the army, wrote in 1710:

It is true, we believe and confess that the Lord

Jesus Christ has forbidden His disciples all vengeance and retaliation, wherefore we, in accordance with His blessed example, life and doctrine, consider ourselves under obligation not to bring suffering, oppression, or affliction upon any one, much less to resist the enemies with the sword. And in our humble opinion there arises no danger to the state or our dear fatherland from our attitude. Certainly this has been established by experience during more than one hundred years of the history of the United Netherlands. The Mennonites can and will the more fervently pray for the protection of the fatherland and the state, the higher they prize the liberty of conscience which they enjoy in this land, even if for conscience' sake they cannot fight with carnal weapons.<sup>49</sup>

The Mennonites of Emden, Germany, in 1713, published a confession in which they say:

We believe that it is our duty to abstain from military service.<sup>50</sup>

Abraham Verduin, a Mennonite minister at Koog in Holland, wrote in 1714:

The Mennonites believe and teach that, as subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom, they do not have liberty to accept the office of worldly rulership, since with this office are connected so many bloody wars, fightings and contentions and other dangers of doing that which before God is sin.<sup>51</sup>

A German non-Mennonite writer, Simon Friedrich Rues, in a work entitled *Impartial Information about the Present Condition of the Mennonites*, published in 1743, says of the numerous group of the Old Flemish Mennonites:

They believe that the government is ordained of God, and therefore render willing obedience to its laws and commands. They teach that taxes and duties must be paid without murmuring and without asking for what purpose they are to be used. They are thankful to God for the blessing of being permitted to live a quiet and peaceable life under the protection of the government. They believe, however, that in the church of Christ there is no room for the government as such,

and if all people were true Christians and the true church of Christ would comprise all men living on earth, there would be no need for the civil government and God would not desire that there should be governments. But since this has never been realized and it cannot be hoped that it will be realized, God has instituted the office of the government. He did this in order that the world may not be made a den of thieves. All men are obligated to obey the magistracy, not only from fear but for conscience's sake. Nevertheless they readily admit that they do not think it right that Christians should hold governmental offices. They say . . . . . that the duties of a magistrate and of a Christian do not agree, for the worldly governments must exercise vengeance, force and violence, but this is forbidden the believer under the New Testament dispensation (Rom. 12:17-21; Matt. 5:38-48). Finally they do not believe that they have sufficient courage and constancy to take upon themselves the various services and difficulties of this office without harm to their Christian life.

They are very strict as concerns the exercise of force and the use of weapons. While many other Mennonites are far more lenient on this point, the members of this group of churches still purport to be non-resistant Christians. They believe that a Christian may not even use force against such resistance as is contrary to the law, but that he must forfeit his property, liberty, and life to his enemies when he is attacked. Therefore none of their members is allowed to have any weapons. The merchants among their number are not permitted to send freight on armed ships. Hence they confine their business mostly to points on the North Sea and the Baltic, instead of risking to send freight to places where, in the absence of provisions for defence, there is danger of falling prey to piracy.<sup>52</sup>

The catechism of Pieter Hendriks, minister of a Mennonite church at Sapmeer in Holland, was for the first time published in 1744, and was used in many of the Old Flemish churches. It has the following on the point of nonresistance:

Since serving in offices of the government involves

many dangers and is closely connected with retaliation and war, as well as with the oath, which Christ has forbidden, therefore His followers must consistently abstain from accepting such offices.<sup>53</sup>

A confession of faith published in 1747 by the Friesian Mennonite churches of Holland and intended for the use of candidates for church membership, contains the following sentences:

I also believe that Christians cannot engage in war nor exercise vengeance against those who may have wronged them, but they must, according to Christ's example, bear the injustice and remember that vengeance is the Lord's.

I believe that the office of the worldly magistracy cannot be consistently held by Christians because it has to do with things named above which, I believe, Christ has forbidden His followers.<sup>54</sup>

In the catechism of the Friesian Mennonites in Holland, published in the same year, the twenty-third part *On Vengeance and War*, comprises 52 questions. Following is a translation of a few of the questions and answers of this part.

What is the third reason that a Christian is not permitted to meet violence with violence, or to engage in war or strife?

The express command of our Savior Himself: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil" (Matt. 5:38, 39). He teaches here entire nonresistance and that we, rather than to use force for self-protection, turn the other cheek to him who has smitten us.

If war is forbidden the Christian, why did John the Baptist not testify against it but taught the soldiers to be content with their wages? (Luke 3:14).

If John the Baptist had forbidden the soldiers to do military service, he would have gone beyond his commission, because he was not the Christ. He came before the law of Christ was given (Gal. 6:2) and had no authority to give a new law.



Would not God's people be quickly destroyed from the earth if they did not resist evil?

No: for the Lord, who has taken upon Himself to protect them, is He who has the hearts of men, even the most ungodly, in His hands and He can direct them for the best of His people.

Does not the example of Paul (Acts 23:16-24) teach us that we may at least have a part in war by hiring other persons to serve as our substitutes?

By no means.

What are some of the practical lessons to be drawn?

That I should in my patience possess my soul (Luke 21:19) and follow my Savior in "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Pet. 3:4); that if I am reviled, I revile not again, if I suffer I threaten not, but commit myself to Him that judgeth righteously. (I Pet. 2:22, 23).

What do you further learn from this?

That I must carefully shun everything that may lead to strife and enmity; that I must not take advantage or speak evil of any one or wrong him in any way.<sup>55</sup>

Gerard Roosen, Pastor of the Mennonite church at Hamburg, Germany, published a *Confession of Faith*, in 1753, which contains the following paragraph:

All these Scripture passages show conclusively that we cannot exercise vengeance against any one, nor resist evil by force, but should much rather bear and suffer the wrong that has been done us. We should esteem our neighbor's life more highly than our temporal possessions. "For this is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (I Pet. 2:19).<sup>56</sup>

The following is taken from a confession of the Old Flemish Mennonites of Groningen, Holland, printed in 1755:

We believe that we must obtain from everything that is at variance with Christian nonresistance and humility, and therefore we prefer not to accept civil offices.

War is contrary to Christian love which teaches us not to hate our enemies, but to love them, to bless them and pray for them.<sup>57</sup>

Cornelis Ris, Pastor of the Mennonite church at Hoorn, in Holland, published, in 1766, a confession of faith of which the following is a part:

From these Scriptures it is, in our opinion, quite clear that for a true follower of Jesus Christ it is inconsistent, unbecoming and not permissible to wield weapons of war to the destruction of our enemies, how much less can he injure and destroy the innocent ones who have not wronged us but upon whom in war often falls the burden of misery and woe. For it is, we believe, impossible that war, as we know it, can be carried on without open violation of the fundamental principles of Christ's kingdom and without harboring many vices and practices which indicate the nature of the devil and of wild beasts rather than that of the followers of the Lamb who are called to show forth His virtues (I Pet. 2:9).

Besides, we believe that all malevolent treatment which we may experience is intended to exercise us in the faith and in the patience of the saints, as we follow the example of Jesus Christ. His holy apostles and many thousands of Christians in the early centuries and in later periods, when suffering for conscience' sake, experienced in this the grace of God making all things work together for their good. Such a peaceful, nonresistant life was moreover plainly prophesied for the subjects of Christ's kingdom.<sup>58</sup>

In the catechism of the Old Flemish Mennonites in Prussia, printed in 1768, the answer to the question, "May church members take part in military service?" is, "No, not by any means." The same catechism contains a confession of faith from which we quote Article 10.

Concerning vengeance we believe that our Savior Jesus Christ in the sermon on the mount has altogether forbidden all vengeance and retaliation. He not only prohibited all vengeance to be taken at our own hand but also such as may be exercised through the author-

ities against one's enemies. While such vengeance [through the government] was permitted and even commanded those of the Old Covenant, we are called to follow Christ's example and footsteps in this matter. If some one reviles us or takes our goods, or resists or smites us, we as Christians must suffer and bear it with patience (I Pet. 2:21; II Cor. 11:10; I Cor. 4:11). And we understand that all going to law is forbidden. Rather than appealing to a court of law, we should yield to our opponent's demands, according to the example of the believers who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods (Heb. 10:34). Yea, according to the doctrine of our Savior Jesus Christ, we must love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good unto them that hate us and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us (Matt. 5:44), that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven.<sup>59</sup>

The Mennonite catechism written by Jacob de Veer, of Danzig, and printed in 1791, has the following questions and answers:

May a member of the church take part in military service?

No, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual (II Cor. 10:3, 4; Eph. 6:12), and moreover it was foretold by the prophets concerning the time of the Gospel of grace that the swords should be made into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3). This concurs with the words of Jesus, Matt. 26:52.

Is it sufficient, however, that we avoid outward revenge?

No, but we must banish all thought of revenge from our minds and not even desire that evil may befall him who has harmed us, much less can we rejoice over it and feel that he deserved it because of the way he dealt with us.

Does such reasoning agree with Jesus' teaching?

Yes, for Jesus has taught us: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that despitefully use you and persecute you (Matt. 5:

44). And He has confirmed this by His own example, and on the cross He prayed for His enemies (Luke 23: 34).<sup>60</sup>

#### IV. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the Mennonite people on the whole maintained, with various degrees of consistency, their historical anti-war attitude though the principle of nonresistance was not everywhere upheld among European Mennonites. In consequence of the Napoleonic wars Europe was militarized to a large extent during this century. Universal military service was generally introduced in continental Europe. With notable exceptions there was during this century among European Mennonites a gradual recession from their historical attitude on the point in question as well as on other points of principle and practice. Where the principle of nonresistance had been permitted to lapse, the way was prepared for the acceptance of military service. Many, however, whose conscience did not permit them to render such service, emigrated to America.

In the period from the third quarter of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the World War, Russia was the only European country in which the Mennonites were exempt from all military service. The Mennonite young men of military age were under duty to devote a number of years to forestry on state lands. This arrangement was entirely separate from the military organization; to accept it was therefore consistent with the profession of the principle of nonresistance.<sup>61</sup>

During the same period the Mennonites of Prussia and Baden were exempt from the so-called combatant service but were nevertheless under obligation to serve

in the army.<sup>62</sup> In the rest of the German states and in other European countries, except Russia, no exemption was granted. Germany and her former allies, by the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles, are now permitted only limited armies consisting solely of volunteers; hence in these countries conscientious objectors encounter no difficulties whatever at the present time.

After about the middle of the nineteenth century there is among the Mennonites of Holland no indication of adherence to the anti-war principle.<sup>62a</sup> In recent years, however, this principle was revived in various Dutch Mennonite circles. A number of Mennonite young men, consequently, refused to take part in military drill and were taken to account by imprisonment.

While during the nineteenth century there was obviously an almost general decline on the part of European Mennonites on the point in question, there is conclusive evidence that during the first half of that century some of the European Mennonites, besides those of Russia and others who emigrated to America, continued to maintain the principle of nonresistance.

The Old Flemish Mennonite Church at Haarlem in Holland published, in 1825, a new edition of the catechism by Pieter Boudewyns which, in the previous century had been in use in many churches. The following questions and answers are taken from this catechism.

Is serving in the office of the magistracy required of believers under the New Dispensation, the same as under the Old?

No, for the kingdom of our King Jesus is not earthly but is a spiritual and heavenly kingdom and is therefore not of this world, as the Lord Jesus Himself declared, John 18:36. And we believe that we have no liberty to seek worldly rulership or to accept and serve in the office of the worldly government, since our spiritual King, Jesus, has expressly said unto His disciples: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise

dominion over them and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:25, 26).

Since it is stated in Scripture that "the powers that be" are ordained of God and that those who hold this office are God's servants (Rom. 13:1-6), why is not consistent for believers to accept such an office?

Because the office of the government is ordained of God in the world but not in the Christian church. And indeed, those of whom Paul speaks as God's servants were at that time unbelievers. With the office of the government are connected various duties that do not well agree with the meek and nonresistant nature of the Christian. And it is certain that vengeance, with which the office of the government is connected, is forbidden the Christian, even as the Lord Jesus clearly teaches, Matt. 5:39.

Does this command (Matt. 5:39) not mean that personal revenge is forbidden rather than the vengeance exercised by the magistracies who do not avenge themselves but execute vengeance upon wrongdoers for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the good?

No, it refers also in particular to the revenge exercised by the government. For private vengeance was not permitted the Jews. Vengeance was committed to their magistrates; and in contrast to the Mosaic law the Lord Jesus has said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you that ye resist not evil." Jesus spoke these words in reference to the law of vengeance, as found in Ex. 21:25; Lev. 24:17-21; Deut. 19:21. These passages of Scripture refer to judicial vengeance, as is clear from the context. Now, the Lord Jesus, in contrast with the law of the Old Covenant, forbids the believers vengeance and resistance. This, then, is an additional reason that it cannot be consistent for the believer to serve in the office of the government. Therefore we do not feel at liberty to desire such offices or to serve in them.

What does this teach us further?

That we must shun all offices which are connected with judicial authority having for their purpose vengeance and punishment of transgressors. We should leave all these things to the worldly authorities and their servants, and should prove ourselves obedient subjects and meek, nonresistant Christians.

May Christians, then, not use violence or go to war, as did the Israelites?

The kingdom of God is not earthly but is a spiritual and heavenly kingdom. And the conflict of the Christian is not against flesh and blood, or with carnal weapons. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (II Cor. 10:4). And how can Christians who must love their enemies and do good unto them, be disposed to injure or kill them, or for temporal reward serve in an office involving such things? We believe therefore that to wage war or to do military service is inconsistent with the profession and duties of a Christian.

But how is it then possible that Christians are not deprived of body and life, goods and possessions and that the little flock of nonresistant Christians can exist at all upon earth?

The first is not always possible, and the Christians have often to endure much oppression, spoiling of goods, grief and suffering, as the Lord Jesus has indeed foretold them. But as concerns the second part of the question, it should be said that the persecutors and wicked can not do all that they may desire but they stand under the power and restraint of Almighty God who can put a ring in the nose of the tyrants and who will not permit the scepter of iniquity to wholly suppress and destroy His people. Thus also in the Apostles' time Christians were at times oppressed and persecuted and then again permitted to enjoy rest and quietness. And Christians also have liberty to flee to places where they may be exposed to less dangers, for

Jesus said to His disciples: "If they persecute you in one city, flee into another" (Matt. 10:23). And it has pleased God now and again so to direct worldly governments that they have not only permitted nonresistant Christians to live in their realms but have also protected them from their enemies and oppressors.

Is it not altogether possible to transgress against Christian love and nonresistance without using violence and weapons?

Certainly, namely when one, out of revenge, shows himself partial, vindictive, unforgiving, hard, and unmerciful toward his neighbor, and would thus either secretly or openly retaliate for injury, real or imaginary. This is clearly inconsistent with Christian duty and love, since we must love and do good not only to our friends but to our enemies as well (Matt. 5:43, 44). It does not suffice for Christians to refrain from using vengeance but they must forgive injury (Matt. 6:14, 15) and overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21). And finally one transgresses against the principle of nonresistance by using inconsiderate words, by evil speaking, tale-bearing against his neighbor, by wishing him evil and the like, contrary to the teaching of Peter (I I Pet. 2:21-23; 3:9), or by speaking angrily or with bitterness against his neighbor. All these things are inconsistent with Christian meekness and are expressly forbidden in Scripture.

What does this teach us?

This teaches us that we must in no way, neither in word nor in deed, transgress against Christian revengelessness and nonresistance, but must in every respect conduct ourselves as meek and nonresistant Christians loving not only our friends and benefactors but also our enemies and injurers. We must do them well and pray for them, keeping continuously before our eyes the perfect example of our Savior and striving to follow Him, and thus give evidence that we are Christians and children of peace who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit and live in love and peace with all men as far as possible, that we may not only in name but also in deed and in truth be meek, nonresistant Christians.<sup>63</sup>



A confession of faith of the Mennonites of Prussia, written by Gerhard Wiebe, of Ellerwald near Elbing, in 1792, was reprinted at Elbing in 1837. Article 10 of this confession contains the following paragraph:

From these passages of Scripture we see that all revenge is forbidden us; therefore we must not use the sword against our enemies. Paul says, II Cor. 10:3, 4: "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God." And since the Lord Jesus has commanded Peter to put up his sword into the sheath, we must not draw it to defend ourselves against our enemies, or to meet violence with violence but we should rather bear and suffer it.

We must not only avoid the sword of war, but our heart should not yield to revengefulness. We should "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Rev. 14:4), not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but be still and bless our enemies if we would inherit a blessing.<sup>64</sup>

In April, 1863, Heinrich Ensz, a Mennonite minister in South Russia, wrote in a letter to Johann Toews, a minister of a Mennonite church near Elbing in Prussia:

If nonresistance is supposed to mean nothing more than the refusal to do military service (as is held by many whose lives, alas! agree with this opinion), we have a glaring inconsistency. There is at the present time the greatest need for efforts by word and pen to the end that we may all realize that our nonresistance must prove itself in our daily life and walk. There must be practical evidence of the love which we should have one to another which is the particular mark of discipleship.

We know that even before the time of Menno Simons, yea from the Apostles' time there were always those, though few in number, who were conscientious Christians and who not only testified before the authorities to the plain and simple teaching of the Scriptures on the point of nonresistance but gave evidence of the sincerity of their profession by an unblamable

daily life following faithfully unto death, as nonresistant Christians, in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not."

Therefore it is our most ardent desire that, for the best interests of us all, immediate efforts be put forth to the end that we may in all consistency and in lowliness lead quiet and nonresistant lives, that it may not be said of us: They say it but do not do it. But if, as is stated in letters from Prussia, one avenges himself on another and it so happened that one was severely struck by another so that it might have cost his life; if one goes to law with another for the sake of earthly things, bringing law suits before worldly authorities which is radically contrary to Christ's teaching (Matt. 5; Luke 6; Rom. 12; I Cor. 6), how can the government believe us that we are nonresistant Mennonites, contrary to the evidence indicating that we are filled with the spirit of retaliation? Friend Toews, you undoubtedly know that the holy Scriptures demand consistency and that resistance can in no point be permitted (Matt. 7:12). If we in every respect lived in humility of heart and were upright, pious and nonresistant, as our confession of faith demands, how faithfully would our civil authorities, as well as your honored government which is animated by a real spirit of toleration, speak a good word for us to those who, on account of our inconsistencies, begrudge us our liberties.<sup>65</sup>

## V. A FEW HISTORICAL INCIDENTS

In the year 1569 a pious and faithful brother and follower of Jesus Christ, named Dirck Willems, of Asperen in Holland, was apprehended and burned at the stake because he had been baptized on the confession of his faith. The officer making the arrest had pursued the fleeing man to a frozen dyke. Willems had crossed in safety. The officer following him broke through the ice. When Wil-

lems perceived that his pursuer was in danger of his life, he quickly returned and aided him in getting out, thus saving his life. The officer's heart was touched and he wanted to let him go, but the burgomaster very sternly called on him from the other side to consider his oath, whereupon Willems was seized by the officer and, after severe imprisonment and great trials, was put to death as stated above, in May, 1569, giving his life in testimony of the truth.<sup>66</sup>

Some time during the early part of the seventeenth century a Mennonite minister, Peter Adrians Houuttuyn, of Hoorn, was one night awakened by a disturbance made by a burglar whom he noticed in the second story of his house. Going to the foot of the stairs he called to the thief above: "Friend, come down, you will not be harmed." The thief came down and Houuttuyn said to him: "Call on me to-morrow morning and I shall talk further with you." The man who had broken into his house was in great need. He was on the following day engaged as a worker in the warehouse of the one he had been attempting to rob, and served his employer faithfully for about twenty-five years.<sup>67</sup>

When, in 1759, the French army under Count de Stainville had defeated the Prussians led by von Buelow, they encamped near the cloister Schaken, in Waldeck. Their commander sent his aide-de-camp, named Stadler, with a detachment of soldiers in search for forage for the horses. They stopped in a village at the house of a Mennonite farmer whom they ordered to show them a field of barley which they could use as pasture for their horses. "For what reason," he asked, "must I go foraging with you?" "There is a good reason," was the reply, "namely that we shall compel you." The officer brandished his sword before the man's face, saying: "Does this make it

any clearer?" "I am not afraid of your weapon," said the farmer quietly, "but come with me, for God has said: 'If any man will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.'" He walked ahead of them, leading them through a grove and along various round-about ways for a long distance. When he stopped, Stadler said to him: "It seems to me we have passed a number of fields of barley; why have you not led us to them?" "Because they were the property of others," he replied, "but here is a field that belongs to me,—let your horses go into it and eat their fill."<sup>68</sup>

In the time of the persecution in Switzerland, especially in the Emmenthal, in the Canton Bern, during the eighteenth century, a number of unprincipled young fellows came at midnight to an old Mennonite minister's home and, to try his faith, began to tear off and destroy the roof of the house. The noise which they made by this deed of darkness awakened the minister from his slumbers. He at once arose and with dismay beheld the work of destruction going on. What did this man of God, (for such he proved himself to be) do? No doubt the scene stirred his heart to righteous indignation, but he did not act upon the impulse. He remembered what attitude he, as a Christian, should take under such circumstances. Silently praying he returned to the bedroom and said to his wife: "Mother, get up, prepare breakfast, for workmen have come to us." Quickly a breakfast was prepared and meanwhile the marauders continued their malicious work of destruction upon the roof. Then the aged minister went out and called them saying: "You have worked long, and no doubt are hungry; now come in and eat." To these men it seemed too good a thing that they should eat the bread of the taunted man, but they slowly came from the roof into the house and sat down at the table. Then the old patriarch bared his venerable head, folded his hands—and the marauders?—they sat in silence. Then he

prayed so fervently, so lovingly and so earnestly, both for them and for himself, that their hearts were softened and their conscience awakened. They became heartily ashamed of what they had done. The meal did not seem to taste good to them. Soon they arose and went again to the roof, not indeed to finish their work of destruction but to reconstruct the roof the best they could, that the fiery coals which had been gathered upon their heads might fall therefrom.<sup>69</sup>



## NOTES

1. These writers are of those European Mennonite circles which have discarded the principle of nonresistance. They would have us believe that the testimony of the early Mennonites against violence and war meant merely disapproval of the prevalent religious tyranny and a protest against the insinuation that they were insurrectionists like the rebellious peasants and the Anabaptists of Muenster. The most prominent writer defending this view was the late Dutch Mennonite historian Karl Vos. In the organ of the "Doopsgezinden" (Mennonites) of Holland, *Zondagsbode* (August 17, 1919), he published an article entitled, *Were Our Forefathers Conscientious Objectors?* and answered this question negatively. In his booklet, *De Weerloosheid der Doopsgezinden* (1924), he set forth the same view. The opinion that the early Mennonites did not hold the principle of nonresistance was also defended by Dr. Cornelius Bergmann in a series of articles printed a number of years ago in the *Zionspilger*, the organ of the Mennonites of Switzerland. A number of articles taking the same view were written by Pastor H. van der Smissen, of Hamburg, editor of the *Mennonitische Blaetter* (*Der Grundsatz der Wehrlosigkeit in seiner historischen Entwicklung dargestellt, Mennonitische Blaetter*, 1888, Nos. 21 and 22; *Der Grundsatz der Wehrlosigkeit und seine Entwicklung in unserer Gemeinschaft, Menn. Bl.*, 1910, Nos. 12 and 13; *Unser Voelklein und der Krieg, Menn. Bl.*, 1916, No. 1). Pastor Johannes Dyserinck, a Mennonite minister of Holland, published in the Dutch magazine *De Gids*, Vol. I, 1890, a valuable treatise on this subject but made certain concessions to the view held by Vos and others. The most important publication on the subject is the scholarly book, *Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, by Dr. W. Mannhardt (Marienburg, 1863). Further literature deserving mention: Ter Borg, J., *Heeft Menno Simons eene volstrekt Algemeene Weerloosheid gepredikt?* in *Mengelwerk*, 1819, No. 4; Neff, Dr. C., *Die Wehrlosigkeit der Mennoniten und der Weltkrieg*, in *Mennonitische Jugendwarte*, October, 1924; Horsch, J., *Die Biblische von der Wehrlosigkeit*, Scottdale, Pa., 1920, pp. 35-52; Correll, Dr. E. H., article *Friedensbewegung in Mennonitisches Lexikon*; Haendiges, E., *Die Lehre der Mennoniten in Geschichte und*

- Gegenwart*, Ibersheim a. Rh., 1921, pp. 56-69; Hirst, M. E., *The Quakers in Peace and War*, London, 1923, pp. 30-33.
2. Luther in his *Sermons on Matthew Chapters 5-7*, Weimar Edition of Luther's Complete Works, vol. 32, pp. 299-555; Koestlin, J., *Luthers Theologie*, Stuttgart, 1901, vol. 2, pp. 326; Koestlin, J., *Die Glaubensartikel der Augsburger Confession erlaeutert*, Halle a. S., 1891, p. 80; Koestlin-Kawerau, *Martin Luther*, Berlin, 1903, p. 116; Horsch, J., *Die biblische Lehre von der Wehrlosigkeit*, Scottdale, Pa., 1920, pp. 25-30.
  3. *Dr. Martin Luthers Saemtliche Werke*, Erlangen Edition, vol. 22, pp. 66-70; Boehmer, H., *Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1918, p. 245; Wernle, P., *Der Evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften der Reformatoren*, Bd. 1, *Luther*, Tuebingen, 1918, pp. 124-137.
  - 3a. Compare the review of Cadoux' book by Harnack, in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, Leipzig, 1921, col. 126.
  - 3b. Staehelin, E., *Oekolampads Beziehungen zu den Romanen*, Basel 1917, pp. 26, 32; Fuesslin, J. C., *Beytraege zur Kirchen-Geschichte des Schweitzerlandes*, Zuerich, 1741-1753, *Vierter Teil*, pp. 406 ff.; Bender, F., *Geschichte der Waldenser*, Ulm, 1850, p. 135.
  - 3c. Vogl, C., *Peter Cheltschiski, ein Prophet an der Wende der Zeiten*, Zuerich und Leipzig, 1926, pp. 92-94.
  4. Egli, E., *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zuercher Reformation*, Zuerich, 1879, No. 623. The date given by Egli is incorrect.
  5. Koehler, W., *Ulrich Zwingli und die Reformation der Schweiz*, Tuebingen, 1919, p. 65; compare Wernle, P., *Der evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften der Reformatoren*, Bd. 2, *Zwingli*, Tuebingen, 1919, p. 73.
  6. Cornelius, C. A., *Geschichte des Muensterischen Aufruhrs*, Leipzig, 1860, Bd. 2, pp 240-249. An English translation of this letter was published by Walter Rauschenbusch in the *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1905. It is important to note that Castelberger and Grebel defended the principle of non-resistance before the beginning of the persecution. This disproves the assertion of the chronicler Johannes Kessler, of St. Gall, who says that this principle was accepted by them only after the government had enacted hostile measures against them. *Johannes Kesslers Sabbata*, St. Gallen, 1892, p. 143.



7. Egli, E., *Die Zuercher Wiedertaeufer zur Reformationszeit*, Zuerich, 1878, p. 97.
8. Egli, *Actensammlung*, No. 1109.
9. There are two modern reprints of the Schlatten Confession: by Walter Koehler, Leipzig 1908, and by Heinrich Boehmer in *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges und der Wiedertaeufer*, Heft 50-51, Bonn, 1910. A translation was published by W. J. McGlothlin in *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Philadelphia, 1911. The citations here given are translated from the edition by Koehler. The title under which this confession was first published is, *Bruederlich Vereinigung etzlicher Kinder Gottes sieben Artikel Betreffend*.
10. In contrast with the Mennonite position on the point in question article 16 of the Augsburg Confession (the authoritative confession of the Lutheran Church) says: "We believe that all Christians may lawfully be magistrates and rulers; they may as judges render decisions according to the imperial laws; they may punish evildoers with the sword, engage in just wars and act as soldiers. Here we condemn the Anabaptists who say that none of the things mentioned agrees with the Christian profession." It may be worth noticing, in passing, that this is a striking testimony against the charge advanced by Zwingli and many others that the early "Anabaptists" pursued revolutionary aims. The Augsburg Confession was written in 1530, i. e., a number of years before the rise of the Muenster Anabaptists.
11. Oecolampadius, J., *Underrichtung von dem Widertauff, von der Oberkeit, und von dem Eyd, auff Carlins N. Widertauffers artickel*, Basel, 1527, sig. D3.
12. Goetzing, E., *Vadians Deutsche Historische Schriften*, Bd. 3, St. Gallen, 1877, p. 501.
13. *Handlung oder Acta gehaltener Disputation und Gespraech zu Zoffingen inn Berner Biet mit den Widertoeuffern*, 1532, pp. 94b, 97b.
14. The protocol of these discussions, comprising about 75,000 words, is in the State Archives of Bern. It has never been printed. The Mennonite Historical Library in Scottdale, Pa., has an exact certified copy.
15. "Das ergist uebel das man erdencken mag." Bullinger, H., *Von dem unverschampten fraefel, ergerlichem verwyrren und*

- unwarhafftem leeren der selbgesandten Widertoeuffern, 1531, p. 139b.
16. Bullinger, H., *Der Widertoeufferen ursprung, fuergang, Secten, Waesen, etc.*, Zuerich, 1561, fol. 16.
  17. *Verantwortung etlicher die man Toeuffer nennt, uff die fragen Warumb sy nit zur kirchen gangind*; printed as an appendix to Bullinger, *Der Widertoeufferen ursprung*, fol. 214-231. Bullinger had frequently referred to this booklet of the Swiss Brethren and therefore decided to publish it. The quotation here given is found in fol. 218b.
  18. *Protocoll, Das ist Alle handlung des gesprechs zu Franckenthal in der Churfuerstlichen Pfaltz*, Heidelberg, 1571, pp. 408, 410, 428, 470, 474.
  19. Bergmann, C., *Die Taeuferbewegung im Kanton Zuerich*, Leipzig, 1916, p. 63.
  20. A translation of the booklet, *On the Sword*, was published by Henry C. Vedder in *Balthasar Hubmaier, the Leader of the Anabaptists*, New York, 1905, pp. 273-310.
  21. *Geschichtbuch der Hutterischen Brueder herausgegeben durch Dr. R. Wolkan von Elias Walter*, Macleod, Alta, 1923, p. 112. The communistic life of the Hutterians has, in principle and aim, nothing in common with modern communism. It has been pointedly said that, while the former is based on the principle, "What is mine, is thine", modern communism says "What is thine, is mine." The Hutterians of the old order have a number of flourishing congregations in South Dakota, Manitoba, and Alberta.
  22. *Rechenschaft unserer Religion, Lehre und Glaubens. Von den Bruedern, die man die Hutterischen nennt*, 1902, pp 105—111.
  23. The figures given with the quotations from Menno Simons indicate the places where they are found in *English Complete Works*, Elkhart, Ind., 1871. These passages were revised by comparison with the Dutch editions of Menno's Works, of 1664 and 1681.
  24. Armies in that period consisted chiefly of those who served voluntarily for hire.
  25. Dyserinck, J., *De Weerloosheid Volgens de Doopsgezinden, in De Gids*, 1890, p. 120.

26. Van Braght, T. J., *Martyrs' Mirror*, English edition, Elkhart, Ind., 1886, p. 722; Dutch edition of 1685, p. 401.
27. *Protocol, Dat is Alle handelinghe des Ghesprecks tot Embden, etc.*, Amsterdam, 1616, pp. 229, 232.
28. *Concept van Ceulen, van den eersten Mey, Anno 1591*, Vlissinghe, 1666, p. 6.
29. Quoted; Mannhardt, W., *Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, Marienburg, 1863, p. 31.
30. Quoted; Twisck, P. J., *Verscheyde Artikulen des Geloofs en Sententien, uit Oude en Nieuwe Leeraers vergadert*, Hoorn, 1694, p. 408.
31. Beck, J., *Geschichtsbuecher der Wiedertaeufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn*, Wien, 1883, p. 58; Loserth, J., *Doctor Balthasar Hubmaier und die Anfaenge der Wiedertaufe in Maehren*, Bruenn, 1893, p. 190; Roehrich, F. W., *Zur Geschichte der straszburgischen Wiedertaeufer*, in *Zeitschrift f. d. hist. Theologie* vol. 30, p. 5.
32. The official text in full of the Edict of the Diet of Spire of 1529 against the Anabaptists may be found in *Aller des Heiligen Roemischen Reichs gehaltene Reichstage, Abschiede und Satzungen*, Mainz, 1666, pp. 210, 211. Full text is to be found also in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon und Geistliches Ruest-Hausz*, etc., 1702, pp. 6-8; likewise edited by Ludwig Keller in *Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft*, vol. 9, Berlin, pp. 55-57. It will be recalled that the revolutionary Anabaptists of Muenster arose at a later date, namely in 1533.
33. The Waterland Mennonite churches were the least conservative of the Mennonites of Holland and North Germany. At that early period they strictly maintained the principle of non-resistance, as did all other Mennonite groups. Hans de Ries is favorably known as the principal defender of the deity of Christ against the (unitarian) Socinians.
34. This confession may be found in Schijn-Maatschoen, *Geschiedenis der Christenen welke in de Vereenigde Nederlanden onder de Protestanten Mennoniten Genaamd worden*. I Deel, Amsterdam 1743, pp. 238-279. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, pp. 24-48, contains an English version which, however, is not translated from the original Dutch but from an unsatisfactory Latin translation.
35. This was the Confession of the so-called High German Men-

- nonites in Holland. A complete translation is found in van Braght, *Martyrs' Mirror*, pp. 32-36.
36. The Confession in use among a majority of the Mennonites in the United States.
  37. Blaupot ten Cate, *S. Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Holland, Zeeland, etc.*, I Deel, Amsterdam, 1847, p. 158.
  38. *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, Verzameld en Uitgegeven door Dr. de Hoop Scheffer, Amsterdam, 1847, p. 158.
  39. Dyserinck, in *De Gids*, 1890, p. 145. The contrast between the Mennonite attitude and that of state church Protestantism on the question of the use of force in self-defense is illustrated by the following quotation from Melanchthon taken from his preface to Luther's booklet "On Self-defense": "At the time when Alexander Macedo had conquered the city of Thebes [in Egypt] by storm, a lady of a noble family was in the city. An officer took possession of her residence and the lady was in danger as concerned her honor and possessions. She received him graciously. A bountiful table was set for him and his companions. Her hospitality pleased the officer. But, having noticed the wealth of the home he, after a sumptuous meal, asked for money and other valuables. The lady replied courteously that she was willing to show him the place where these things could be found; she had thrown her valuables into a well within her residence, she said, and there they may find them. This well she would show the officer alone. Then the officer went with her to the well. And as he stood looking down, the lady suddenly pushed him that he fell into the deep well, and then she, with her maidens, threw down stones killing the officer. Such examples show that the God-given natural light of reason judges that self-defense in need is right and proper. Therefore there is no doubt that such self-defense is for every one a rightful act and, if exercised by a believer, it is pleasing to God. For the Gospel allows the exercise of natural rights in accordance with common law." Luther's *Erklärung von der Frage, die Nothwehr belangend*, having the preface of Melanchthon from which this citation is taken, was printed at Wittenberg, in 1547.
  40. Quoted in *Christelijck Huys-Boeck, Over de Volghende Artijckelen des Christelijcken Gheloofs, etc.*, Vergadert door I. D. B. (1643), p. 549.

41. The same work, p. 744.
42. Quoted by Twisck p. 420.
43. Quoted by Mannhardt, Appendix, p. 27.
44. Quoted by Dyserinck in *De Gids*, 1890, p. 304.
45. Quoted by Mannhardt, Appendix, p. 31.
46. *Korte Grondstellingen van de Christelyke Leere der Doopsgezinden*, Amsterdam, 1699, p. 30.
47. *Verdediging der Christenen die Doopsgezinde genaamd worden*, Amsterdam, 1699, p. 74.
48. Dyserinck, in *De Gids*, 1890, p. 144.
49. *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, 1909, p. 154.
50. Quoted by Mannhardt, Appendix, p. 39.
51. Quoted by Dyserinck in *De Gids*, 1890, p. 309.
52. Rues, S. F., *Aufrichtige Nachrichten von dem Gegenwaertigen Zustande der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten*, Jena, 1743, pp. 23-26.
53. Hendriks, P., *Schriftuurlyke Katechismus waarin de Grond-Lere der Doopsgezinden in't gemeen, dog der zogenoemde Oude Vlamingen in't byzonder, met den Woorde Gods open gelegd is*, Groningen, 1744, p. 285.
54. *Kort Begrip van de Leere der Waarheyt Volgens het Gevoelen der Doops-Gesinde Christenen, etc.*, Uytgegeven volgens Kerkeleyke Resolutie, Amsterdam, 1747, p. 359.
55. The same work, pp. 263-271.
56. Roosen, G., *Evangelisches Glaubens-Bekaendtnisz der Tauff-Gesinneten Christen oder also genandten Mennoniten*. Gedruckt im Jahr Christi 1753, p. 35.
57. Quoted by Mannhardt, Appendix, p. 51
58. Ris, C., *De Geloofsleere der waare Mennoniten of Doopsgezinden*, Hoorn, 1766, pp. 142-144. A translation of this work was published under the title *Mennonite Articles of Faith*, by the Mennonite Book Concern, Berne, Ind., 1904.
59. *Confession, oder Kurtzer und einfaeltiger Glaubens-Bericht der Alten Flaemischen Tauff-Gesinneten Gemeinde in Preussen*, Gedruckt in Jahr 1768, pp. 92 and 26.
60. Quoted by Mannhardt, Appendix, p. 54.

61. At the beginning of the World War the church leaders of the Mennonites of Russia published a proclamation suggesting that as many of their young men as would be inclined to do so, volunteer for noncombatant service. Many followed this advice and enlisted in the hospital department of the army. Compare the article, *Die Suedrussischen Mennoniten in der Kriegs- und Revolutionszeit*, in *Christlicher Bundesbote*, Berne, Ind., July 22, 1920. The more conservative Mennonites of Russia emigrated to America in the years 1874 to 1878.
62. When the mobilization order was issued in Prussia, in 1914, scarcely one fourth of the Mennonite men drafted availed themselves of the privilege granted them by the government. The great majority chose "combatant" service. To a very marked extent the principle of nonresistance had been permitted to lapse during the preceding half century.—*Mennonitische Blaetter*, 1917, No. 1.
- 62a. The church at Balk in Friesland maintained the principle of nonresistance longer than any other Dutch Mennonite congregation. Their elder (bishop) R. J. Smit, with a number of the families of his congregation, emigrated to America in 1853 for conscientious reasons. They settled in Elkhart County, Indiana, and eventually united with the Salem Mennonite Church.
63. *Onderwyzinge des Christelyken Geloofs, Volgens de Belydenis der Christenen die men de Oude Vlaamsche Mennoniten noemt, Waarin derzelver Leere en Gemeentelyke Huishoudinge Schriftmatig voorgesteld en bewezen word.* Door Pieter Boudewyns, Sneek, 1825, pp. 276-292.
64. Quoted by Mannhardt, Appendix, p. 56.
65. The letter was printed in *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, Hillsboro, Kansas, December 1, 1926.
66. Van Braght, *Martyrs' Mirror*, p. 710.
67. Dyserinck, in *De Gids*, 1890, p. 161.
68. *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, 1872, p. 94.
69. Ellenberger, J., *Bilder aus dem Pilgerleben*, 1880, p. 126.









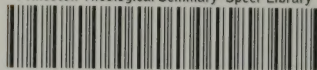


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